

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Sweepster Attachments LLC

Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center

Sweepster Attachments Clean Up on Lean Implementation

Client Profile:

Sweepster Attachments LLC, founded in 1945, has grown to become the largest rotary sweeper manufacturer in the United States. The company manufactures a complete line of rotary power sweepers ranging from a 3-foot walk-behind to a 24-foot-wide, high speed airport runway sweeper. Sweepers mount to tractors and loaders and are manufactured in windrow and pick-up styles. Sweepster also manufactures replacement brushes and parts for all sweepers. The company employs 155 people at its facility in Dexter, Michigan.

Situation:

Sweepster was experiencing downtime due to inadequate maintenance procedures and lack of standardization. Extended time for changeover was limiting production workflow and on-time delivery. Workflow from orders received and processed through production scheduling and shipping was inefficient. The company contacted the Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center (MMTC), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for assistance.

Solution:

To improve efficiency and reduce costs, MMTC provided skills training in Lean Business Solutions both for production and scheduling. Initial training was conducted in Total Preventative Maintenance (TPM), and included autonomous maintenance, preventive and predictive maintenance, and TPM metrics. Additional Lean training focused on workplace organization, the use of checklists and worksheets in the creation of changeover instructions and developing standardized procedures. MMTC facilitated a total of 5 Kaizen events focused on establishing an autonomous maintenance system consisting of initial cleaning, identifying and addressing the causes and spread of contamination, developing standards for cleaning and lubrication, inspection standards and workplace organization using 5S techniques. Goals included developing process standards and improving changeover time to increase production efficiency, reducing waste of motion and transportation, reducing WIP, and reducing square footage consumed. A specific office Kaizen event examined the eight types of waste as they apply to the office setting, developed process mapping with swim lanes to identify and eliminate nonvalue added activities and identified process improvements to shorten lead-times.

Results:

- * Reduced downtime and improved maintenance procedures saving \$25,000 a year.
- * Increased time valued at \$280,000 a year.
- * Reduced order entry and processing activities by 50 percent.

Testimonial:

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"Sweepster really benefited from Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center's training and on-site consulting. We knew that we needed help but we were not aware of how much improvement was possible. The new changeover procedures coupled with changes in the layout of tools has reduced our downtime. We found almost one hour of extra production per day. The changes in order processing flow have helped us all to communicate better which has reduced errors. I have to thank MMTC for their mentoring and their assistance in making us a better company."

Gene Granowicz, Operations Manager